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## An Investigation Into The California Opportunity Program.

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*University of the Pacific*

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CALIFORNIA OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of the School of Education

University of the Pacific

---

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

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August 1974

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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CALIFORNIA OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

### Abstract of Dissertation

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to describe the California Opportunity Program and to determine if the program was meeting its legislative mandate to assist students in resolving problems impeding success in regular classes.

**PROCEDURES:** Six school districts were selected from the one hundred twenty-four California school districts operating Opportunity Programs at the secondary level during the 1972-73 school year. The Opportunity Program in each school district included in the study was described on the basis of interviews with school district administrators, building administrators, instructional staff, students, and classroom observation. Data were collected from each school district regarding student selection process, teacher-student ratio, teacher preparation, auxiliary services regularly rendering assistance, administrative support, facilities, program focus, classroom procedures, student evaluation procedures, perceived factors contributing to Opportunity Program success, and rate of successful student return to regular classes.

**FINDINGS:** The data collected indicated that wide variations existed in the implementation of the Opportunity Program. The student selection process reflected the program philosophy of each school district; two of the school districts felt that the purpose of the Opportunity Program was behavioral rehabilitation and as such was not to be used for remediation, while the remaining four felt that the need for behavioral rehabilitation was often accompanied by a need for remediation. Although only one school district has a screening committee, all agreed that one would improve their Opportunity Program. Teacher-student ratio ranged from 1:12 to 1:25, with teachers having fewer than 15 students assuming additional school duties. Less than thirty percent of the teachers held graduate degrees, while just over thirty-five percent were on their first teaching assignment. All of the Opportunity Programs had teacher-aides, four made regular use of school counselors, three were assisted by school administrative staff, two received aid from school psychologists, two had student teachers, and one was afforded weekly psychiatric consultation. Administrative support was characterized by half as strong and half as adequate. All Opportunity Programs were housed in facilities as good or better than the regular classes in their respective school districts, with five of the six school districts either conducting their program in a separate facility or planning to do so in the near future. Individualized instruction was employed by all, with programmed materials being used by four programs. Counseling was primarily confined to group work, with emphasis on parental involvement in half the programs. Remedial instruction and field trips were considered the two most important factors contributing to Opportunity Program success, followed by the employment of a selection committee and vocational education. The rate of successful return to regular classes ranged from five to thirty-three percent.

**CONCLUSIONS:** (1) The Opportunity Program does not successfully return a high percentage of students to regular classes. (2) It does provide an alternative educational experience which enables some students who would otherwise drop out to graduate from high school. (3) Most of the students being served by the Opportunity Program need more than the short-term assistance suggested by its legislative mandate. (4) The California State Department of Education should assume an active role in developing program guidelines and curriculum.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:** Additional research should be conducted to: (1) Replicate this study with a larger sample. (2) Consider the relationship of such variables as sex, race, academic ability, language facility, interests, attitudes, family and other out of school factors to Opportunity Program success. (3) Compare student selection criteria with rate of successful student return to regular classes. (4) Investigate the relationship between various Opportunity Program curricula and rate of successful student return to regular classes. (5) Interview a large sample of Opportunity Program students and parents to determine if their educational expectations are being met.

## PROJECT PROCESS

### A Model

### To Promote

### Institutional Change

.....What I am after is an alternative to separation and rage, some kind of connection to things to replace the system of dependence and submission - the loss of self - that now holds sway, slanted toward violence. I am trying to articulate a way of seeing, of feeling, that will restore to the young a sense of manhood and potency without at the same time destroying the past. In a sense, then, I am calling for a reversal of most educational thought. The individual is central; the individual, in the deepest sense, is the culture, not the institution. His culture resides in him, in experience and memory, and what is needed is an education that has as its base the sanctity of the individual's experience and leaves it intact.....

Peter Marin, "The Open Truth  
and Fiery Vehemence of Youth"

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"The problem of the school dropout is not a new one; it began within a few hours after the opening of the first school" (Schreiber and Kaplan, 1964, p. 3).

While recognition of this problem probably occurred almost immediately, solution has proven to be substantially more difficult, with no panacea having been discovered to date. The State of California is attempting to alleviate this problem in part through the statewide implementation of the Opportunity Program in its public schools (California Education Code, Section 6500, 1973).

The Opportunity Program, as its name implies, provides an opportunity for the actual or potential dropout to reestablish himself in school with the assistance of the Opportunity Program staff. The need for such a program can be simply justified: "The United States cannot afford to have almost one million youths drop out of school each year to become unwanted and unemployed" (Schreiber, 1968, p. 203).

For the purposes of this study, the actual dropout is considered to be that student who has not completed the

prescribed course of study for high school graduation, has not attained an age legally allowing him to abandon formal education, is not otherwise legally exempted from compulsory school attendance, and yet is not attending school. The potential dropout is considered to be that student who has exhibited behavior indicating a likelihood that he may become an actual dropout. The specific objective of the Opportunity Program, as mandated by the California State Legislature, is to return the actual dropout to an educational setting and to provide additional educational services to those students who are not succeeding in school. Under this definition, the Opportunity Program is designed to meet the needs of both the actual and potential dropout. The goal of the Opportunity Program is to return these students successfully to the regular classroom (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973).

The last few years have brought an influx of categorical federal aid to education, much of which is specifically intended to help the dropout student. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), for example, provides funds for the development of dropout control programs. The city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, using such funds, has developed an experimental program similar to the California Opportunity Program, which it has entitled the Individualized Instruction Program (IIP).

During its first year of operation, thirty-three of one hundred fourteen dropout students who were enrolled completed high school requirements and graduated (Dauw, 1970, p. 21). New York City also has experimented with dropout control programs, one of which, the School-Home Liaison Program, sends paraprofessional workers into the homes of high school students who show serious problems in school attendance, adjustment, or achievement. This program resulted in a decrease in absenteeism and tardiness, and an increase in English achievement (Simon, 1970). The above examples indicate that states other than California have recognized the need for dropout control programs and have implemented them with some degree of success.

The Opportunity Program, as currently defined by the California Education Code, imposes no guidelines on curriculum design. As such, each implementing district has considerable discretion in program format and is able to tailor its classes to perceived individual needs. Though the resultant individuality makes it difficult to draw a generalized profile of the Opportunity Program on a statewide basis, this study does attempt to identify elements of commonality among individual programs and their implied relationship to program effectiveness.

While "the comprehensive high school is the American dream applied to education" (Miller, 1971, p. 370),

there are many students "who are not well served, who are denied opportunity, and who are forced to conform to an educational system which is not designed for their needs" (Howe, 1971, p. 198). To redesign the educational system to serve the needs of all is beyond the scope of the Opportunity Program, but this program is intended to provide a climate for positive adjustment and to prepare the student to participate successfully in the regular school program.

#### Statement of the Problem

Substantial numbers of students are not succeeding in the mainstream of public education in the California public schools and are therefore being placed in the Opportunity Program. This program has been in existence for several years without definitive analysis of its effectiveness, nor has the program been adequately described in terms of curriculum and organizational structure. There is a need to determine if the Opportunity Program as implemented by participating school districts is meeting its stated objective as mandated by the California State Legislature.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if the Opportunity Program in the State of California is meeting

its stated objective. This objective is that, " . . . the program shall be constructed with a view to the improvement of the pupil and his restoration, as soon as practicable, to regular school and regular class which . . . he would be required to attend" (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973).

The original plan for this study involved the collection of quantitative data from a fifty percent sample of school districts offering an Opportunity Program at the high school level during the 1970-1971, 1971-1972, and 1972-1973 school years. These data were to have reflected the changes in school attendance, days of suspension from school, and grade point averages for a random selection of ten students in each selected school district who were in regular classes during the 1970-1971 and 1972-1973 school years and who were in the Opportunity Program at the tenth grade level during the 1971-1972 school year.

Additional data were sought by means of an "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" to be completed by an Opportunity Program teacher in each selected school district. The purpose of this instrument was to establish a composite description of Opportunity Program format in terms of student selection criteria, teacher-student ratio, teacher preparation, administrative support, curriculum, and teacher perceptions of factors contributing to program success.

The data return (four percent on the quantitative instrument and twenty-five percent on the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet") was considered insufficient for the purposes of the study. Follow-up on such a small initial return was deemed ill-advised. In retrospect, it was recognized that the study as originally conceived contained some complex problems. The data requests were sent on a circuitous route, first to the office of the superintendent of the school district for approval, then to a building principal for approval, and then to appropriate Opportunity Program personnel, perhaps never reaching their final destination. The quantitative data instruments required a time commitment in excess of what should have been expected. Finally, the evaluative nature of the study may have caused a defensive reaction and resulted in non-compliance.

In its revised form, the purpose of this study became two-fold: first, to determine the rate of successful return to classes of regular attendance for Opportunity Program students at six selected school districts (a five percent sample), and second, to develop a composite description of the Opportunity Program as represented by the sample. The "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" was employed as a standarizing instrument in the collection of data from school district personnel, building adminis-

trators, and instructional staff.

### Rationale for the Study

"The agency which should assume primary responsibility for alleviating the problems of defiant youth is the public school. It is a responsibility which authorities have been inclined to ignore for various reasons" (Schreiber, 1967, p. 275). This statement provides the basic rationale for the study. Techniques must be devised to substantially reduce the dropout rate. Schools are beginning to recognize the need for dropout oriented programs (Schuster, 1971, p. 35), and experimental programs like the California Opportunity Program are being planned and implemented in other states (Dauw, 1970, p. 156). If research indicates that the California Opportunity Program is working as intended, then these findings will be of value both to the State of California in evaluating and revising its program and to other states in implementing their programs.

The Opportunity Program is presently in its infancy. It has been implemented at the high school level in 124 school districts in the State of California. Hopefully the results of this study will enable those schools presently maintaining an Opportunity Program to constructively evaluate their classes in comparison with the sample in



this study. It is also hoped that the results of this study may be of assistance in providing direction to those schools planning an Opportunity Program in the future.

### Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used throughout this study:

Opportunity Program. ". . . it is the intent of the Legislature to provide an opportunity for pupils who are habitually truant from the instruction which they are lawfully required to attend, or who are irregular in attendance, or who are insubordinate or disorderly during their attendance upon instruction to resolve their problems and to reestablish themselves for return to regular classes or regular schools as soon as practicable" (California Education Code, Section 6500, 1973).

Continuation Education. ". . . it is the intent of the Legislature that continuation education schools and classes shall be established and maintained in order to meet the special educational needs of pupils to provide: (1) an opportunity for the completion of the required academic courses of instruction to graduate from high school, (2) a program of instruction that may emphasize occupational orientation or a work-study schedule . . . , or (3) a specially designed program of individualized

instruction and intensive guidance services to meet the special needs of pupils with behavior or severe attendance problems, or (4) a flexible program combining the features in (1), (2), and (3)" (California Education Code, Section 5950, 1973).

Suspension. ". . . no student shall be suspended from school for more than five consecutive days in a school year except he shall be first transferred to and enrolled in either one other regular school for adjustment purposes, an opportunity class in his school of residence, an opportunity school or class, or a continuation education school or class" (California Education Code, Section 10617.5, 1973).

Long-Term Suspension. "No pupil shall be suspended from a secondary school for more than the duration of the current semester" (California Education Code, Section 10607, 1973).

Truant. "Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on each of more than three days in one school year is a truant . . . ." (California Education Code, Section 12401, 1973).

Habitual Truant. "Any pupil is deemed an habitual truant who has been reported as truant three or more times" (California Education Code, Section 12403, 1973).

### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to a five percent sample of Opportunity Programs operating at the high school level in the public schools of the State of California. The diversity of educational communities and the lack of program homogeneity delimits the generalizability of the findings. This study is intended to serve as an initial investigation into the Opportunity Program and to identify basic elements of commonality among individual programs.

### Overview of the Study

In this first chapter, the problem and purpose of the study have been stated, the rationale for the study has been presented, terms have been defined, and the limitations of the study have been indicated. A review of the literature related to this study is presented in Chapter 2. This review includes an overview of the Opportunity Program in California, goals and objectives of the Opportunity Program, curriculum of the Opportunity Program, previous Opportunity Program assessment, and selected brief descriptions of similar programs.

The procedures followed in conducting this study are described in Chapter 3. This description includes selection of the sample, selection and administration of the measurement criteria, the descriptive design, and the descriptive analysis. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. These results are stated in both narrative and tabular form. The final chapter, Chapter 5, is devoted to interpretation and discussion of the results, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

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## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

One need not look far into the literature to find that there has been a substantial amount of research regarding the dropout student. However, research dealing with ongoing in-school rehabilitative programs as a supplement to normal curriculum is less conspicuous. This lack of research in the area of in-school rehabilitation is likely the result of two factors: (a) the techniques of the Opportunity-type program are relatively new and have drawn little attention, and (b) the research in the area of the dropout student has been concerned with cause and effect (Hickman, 1968) and has not been concerned with supplemental techniques such as the Opportunity Program.

A review of the research related to the on-campus rehabilitation of the potential and actual dropout is presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into five sections: (a) an overview of the Opportunity Program in California, which includes a discussion of the history of this type of program, its legal bases, and its current status in the State of California; (b) goals and objectives

of the Opportunity Program, including the underlying rationale for the Opportunity-type and the desired program outcomes; (c) curriculum of the Opportunity Program, including existing research available on instructional counseling and disciplinary techniques employed in dropout prevention programs; (d) previous Opportunity Program assessment citing an evaluation of student reaction to the program in one school district; (e) selected brief descriptions of similar programs in other states.

#### An Overview of the Opportunity Program

The present Opportunity Program is a derivative of the original Continuation Education Program. Continuation education has been in existence in the State of California since 1919. While the original intent of the Continuation program was to provide part-time education to the employed student, it shortly assumed its present primary function of providing educational services to those students who could not succeed in the regular public schools (Voss, 1968). In time it became apparent that a significant body of students existed whose needs were not served by either the regular school program or the Continuation school program. Specifically included in this group of students were those who, while academically capable of succeeding in the regular school program, were experiencing adjustment problems in

school which interrupted satisfactory achievement. To this end the state legislature enacted Section 6500 of the California Education Code, which provides for the Opportunity Program.

In enacting this article, it is the intent of the Legislature to provide an opportunity for pupils who are habitually truant from instruction upon which they are lawfully required to attend, or who are irregular in attendance, or who are insubordinate or disorderly during their attendance upon instruction to resolve their problems and to reestablish themselves for return to regular classes or regular schools as soon as practicable (California Education Code, 1973, Section 6500).

To provide for the establishment of the Opportunity Program on a statewide basis the state legislature enacted Section 6502 of the California Education Code. This legislation is stated in such a manner as to allow each implementing district to determine the extent to which it wishes to physically isolate the Opportunity Classes from the regular school program through room or building assignment.

The governing board of any school district, or the county board of education, may establish schools or may set apart public school buildings or may set apart in public school buildings a room or rooms for pupils in grades 1 through 12, inclusive, as described in section 6500. The school building so established or set apart shall be known as an opportunity school and the room or rooms set apart in a public school building shall be known as opportunity class or classes (California Education Code, 1973, Section 6502).

In an interview with Emil Anderson, developer and principal of Opportunity High School Number One in San Francisco, background information about the evolution of the Opportunity Program was learned. In 1966, Mr. Anderson joined a broad-based committee of sixty school administrators, counselors, and teachers sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to develop an alternative school program for students who were not succeeding in the traditional school curriculum and yet were not suited for placement in a continuation education program. On August 25, 1967, the California State Legislature enacted legislation allowing the creation of the Opportunity Program. In the Spring of 1968, the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education allocated \$170,000 for the development of an Opportunity School in San Francisco. In the Fall of 1968, Opportunity School Number One opened.

During the 1972-1973 school year there were 375 schools in 123 California school districts offering Opportunity Classes. Some Opportunity Classes were housed in regular classrooms within the school proper. Other Opportunity Classes were held in special buildings on isolated parts of the school campus or off-campus entirely.



### Goals and Objectives of the Opportunity Program

The establishment of goals and objectives has become an accepted basis for evaluation of performance in education (Mager, 1962). The goal of the Opportunity Program is succinctly stated in the California Education Code, Section 6501.

The assignment of any pupil to an opportunity school, class or program shall be conducted with a view to the improvement of the pupil and to his restoration, as soon as practicable, to the regular school and regular class in which he would, if not so assigned, be required to attend. The governing board of a school district maintaining an opportunity school may confer a diploma upon any pupil who has satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of study of the school district in an opportunity school maintained by the district (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973).

The aspect of the Opportunity Program which differs from other alternative placements is that it is intended to return the student to his regular classes as soon as practicable. This is an important concept, as it dictates the type of student the program is designed to serve. The Opportunity Program is intended to help the failing student who is not succeeding because of minor academic or behavioral problems. It is not designed to be a major remediative or rehabilitative institution. As such, its function should be to serve those students who are not succeeding in regular classes, but whose problems are not severe enough to qualify for other special classes or

schools, and whose problems are likely to be resolved sufficiently during the remainder of one school year to return successfully to regular classes no later than the beginning of the following school year.

#### Curriculum of the Opportunity Program

Opportunity Program curriculum typically includes English, history and mathematics. The underlying concept of the Opportunity Program is that the psychological advantage of a separate, comfortable, and somewhat isolated setting, a reduced pupil-teacher ratio, small group discussions, individualized instruction, and individualized counseling for academic and personal problems will reduce the number of students who drop out of school (Dauw, 1970). Reduced class size permits the student greater and more immediate accessibility to the Opportunity Program teacher. It also allows the teacher to spend more time with the individual student and to become more closely acquainted with the student's individual needs (Schuster, 1971).

The actual and potential dropouts are usually characterized academically by "poor self-image, frustration from encountering the regular academic program, an almost total inability to communicate, and no expectation that high school will bring educational success" (Thornburg and Gillespie, 1971). The individualization of instruction

in the Opportunity Program allows curricula to be tailored to the needs and abilities of each student. Constant teacher contact permits the development of a more meaningful learning experience and facilitates the formation of a more positive attitude toward personal academic success (Almen, 1971).

The curricular thrust of Opportunity High School Number One in San Francisco, for example, is to provide a flexible academic program combined with maximum chance for work experience placement. The faculty is comprised of fifteen certificated school counselors functioning in the dual capacity of teacher and counselor. The remainder of the staff consists of a work experience coordinator (also a certificated school counselor), a vice-principal, a principal (Mr. Anderson) and custodial personnel. The school is located in a facility largely donated and reconstructed by downtown merchants, allowing it to operate on an annual of funding of \$909 per student in average daily attendance compared to a funding of \$1,400 to \$1,500 per student in average daily attendance for the rest of San Francisco Unified School District, according to Mr. Anderson. Sixty-one local firms hire students from the school in a cooperative work experience program, with the Bank of America being the largest employer. Eighty-five

percent of the student body is either gainfully employed on a part-time basis or is involved in volunteer community service.

#### Previous Assessment of the Opportunity Program

Although the Stockton Unified School District in Stockton, California, has conducted an unpublished in-house evaluative survey of past Opportunity Program students, a thorough search of the literature reveals that no assessment of the Opportunity Program has been published. The results of the Stockton survey were limited by the sample, which was comprised of seventy students who were in the Stockton Unified School District Opportunity Program while in the ninth grade and who were interviewed during the seventh month of their tenth grade year. The purpose of the study was to profile the typical Opportunity Program student within the district and to determine if he felt that the program met his individual needs (Vaughn, 1973).

Response to this survey has indicated a positive reaction on the part of participants in the Stockton Unified School District Opportunity Program, but there exists no analysis of program effectiveness on a statewide basis. John R. Eales, coordinator of the Opportunity Program for the California State Department of

Education, indicated that his office has done no more than compile a list of school districts offering an Opportunity Program. He has stated that it still remains to be determined that the program is in fact meeting the goal mandated by the legislature, namely successful return of the student to the regular school program.

#### Similar Programs in Other States

Dropout prevention programs traditionally operate in three basic areas: enriched academic curriculum, personal counseling services, and vocational training (Cutter and Jones, 1971). A program may encompass one, two, or all three of these elements. The following represents a sample of the variety of experimental dropout prevention programs implemented in the recent past. The programs selected for description provide insight into the variety of the organizational and curricular options available to the California Opportunity Program.

A Language Arts Program for the Nonacademic Adolescent. In an effort to reduce the number of dropouts in a South Carolina school system, an experimental English curriculum focusing on reading skills and attitudes toward school was created. The participating students were uninterested in continuing their formal education beyond

the high school level and were accustomed to low achievement in school work. Learning activities in the program were selected to capture student interest and to generate experiences of success. For example, students with problems in basic skills were given activities for building oral language, reading, writing and listening skills. These activities included mock interviews, taping of conversations, newspaper reading, vocabulary study from standard forms, analysis of advertisements and signs, paperback book reading, journal writing, free-response writing, and discussion of current popular issues. Methods of grading and evaluation were revised to more meaningfully reflect student accomplishment. Results of reading skill tests showed that the program was successful in improving reading skills, with the average student advancing his reading ability almost two years after having spent one year in the program. Principals from the high schools involved attributed a lower dropout rate to the success of the program (Scott, 1971).

Experimental Program for Potential Minority Youth Dropouts. Incoming high school freshmen with a history of low achievement, discipline problems, and hostility towards school and society were characterized by a poor self-image, frustration from encountering the regular academic program,

an almost total inability to communicate, and no expectation that high school would bring educational success.

The resulting need was for a special academic program that would make learning more meaningful, create an effective climate conducive to altering negative self-image, provide positive rather than negative reinforcement, and increase existing intellectual skills. Such a program was begun in the 1968-1969 academic year in the Casa Grande Union High School in Casa Grande, Arizona. Students who were involved in the special program during the 1968-1969 and 1969-1970 academic years differed from the scholastically similar students who had been their predecessors. Only nine and one-half percent of these students dropped out of school compared to an average of twenty percent in previous years. Absenteeism averaged only five percent among these students compared to an average of fifteen percent among comparable students in previous years. Minimal increase in intellectual skills was also demonstrated, as most students showed a post-test increase on a test designed to measure potentiality in the areas of abstract reasoning, numerical ability, verbal ability, and language usage (Differential Aptitude Test). Although curriculum materials used in this program were specifically selected for minority students, the philosophy was felt to

be a valid one for dropout prevention programs in general (Thornburg and Gillespie, 1971).

Project VIII: Focus on Dropouts. Project VIII was an innovative behavioral science oriented educational program, funded under Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, designed to attack the personal, social, and educational problems of students whose previous record of school failure and frustration had indicated a high dropout potential. The program was cooperatively operated, involving the Paducah Public Schools, Louisville Public Schools, Murray State University, and the University of Louisville. Project VIII contained three major components and a management system: (1) a classroom intensive unit program providing highly specialized learning processes plus motivation and personal adjustment activities; (2) two project staff members providing intensive training for regular classroom teachers of the target area schools in Paducah and Louisville in order to clarify their attitudes toward the program and modify their behaviors to create a more positive classroom atmosphere; and, (3) a home-school program involving the parents in many of the school activities. Four home-school coordinators and two assistants worked full-time to help parents understand their children's behavior and to help in the development of



better parent-child relationships. Quantitative evaluation was not available (Paducah Public Schools, 1971).

Project Process. Project Process, funded through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title VIII, was an integrated model within the existing school system concentrating on reducing the number of dropouts by means of an institutional change strategy. The basic goal of the project was to develop a flexible atmosphere conducive to learning. Within this goal was the assumption that this could be accomplished for a long term effect only if the project focused on treating the underlying problems rather than the symptoms of the problems. This led to the premise that adolescents do not by their very nature tend to drop out of learning, but are pushed out by factors within the school, home, or community that necessarily need to change. This process began with the delineation of objectives in performance terms from the goals of Project Process and the programs to be implemented. The evaluation program was designed to provide the necessary procedures and skills for the collection, organization, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of descriptive data throughout the entire project. Its nature was such that it allowed for process modifications while insuring the interpretation of expected and unexpected outcomes in

terms of recorded measurements, observations, input, and process information. The following results were attributed to the program for its first year of operation: (1) a 20% increase in attendance, (2) a reduction in suspension, and (3) an increase in student grade point average (Fall River Public Schools, 1972).

Urban League Street Academies. The Street Academy was a program designed to meet the dropout as in individual and to provide continuing support to him in his daily life. The academies operated from storefronts located in New York City neighborhoods where there were large concentrations of school dropouts. They were staffed, at the minimum, by a project director, a street worker, and a full-time teacher. Other street workers established relationships with youth on street corners and other hang-outs. The stated objectives of the program were: (a) establishing rapport with youth who drop out of Benjamin Franklin High School, as well as with those who were currently in school, but were experiencing problems of adjustment and learning; (b) diagnosing and remedying the educational and related deficiencies of those referred, and helping them to return to school or to continue their education in other ways; (c) helping these students to build leadership qualities, and to raise their aspiration

levels so they could become more effective in meeting life's problems in the community; and (d) providing improved teaching techniques, curriculum, and enriched educational services, in addition to a host of other services crucial to survival in the ghetto (Urban Education Inc., 1969).

School-Home Contact Program. The School-Home Contact Program operated in New York City. The main stated purpose of this project was to send 100 Family Assistants who were familiar with the community into the homes of senior high school students who showed serious problems in school attendance, adjustment, and achievement. The project was designed to provide a link between home and school for 15,000 such potential dropouts by having the Family Assistants serve as models for the students, in a ratio of 150 to 1, under the supervision of the school administration. Visitations were made by these paraprofessionals to the homes to help the parents learn what to expect from the school, and how they could help their children to adjust and achieve. The Family Assistants were recruited from the target neighborhoods and served eighteen schools throughout the city. They worked five hours a day, and made additional evening or weekend home visits when visitations were not possible during the daytime. Briefly summarized, the major findings were that

the program had contributed to: (1) a reduction in absenteeism from school, (b) a reduction in class cutting, (c) a reduction in tardiness to class, (d) a reduction in school dropouts, (e) no discernable improvements in academic achievement, (f) positive school-parent relations, and (g) positive student attitudes (Erickson, 1971).

Diversified Satellite Occupations Program. The interim report described a program conducted for elementary, junior high, and senior high grades during the 1970-1971 school year. The elementary program was designed to help students develop an understanding of occupational competence. The prevention of dropouts and individualization of instruction were concerns of the junior high school program. Dropout prevention, re-enrollment of prior dropouts, and providing occupational experience and information were the major concerns at the high school level. Two of the centers made arrangements for senior high school students to gain work experience, with pay, as teachers' aides during part of the school day. Two of the junior high schools showed positive results in dropout reduction and scholastic performance during the first year through a close relationship between teachers and students. The elementary program was felt to be ineffectual and was curtailed for the 1971-1972 school year. The savings thus

generated were redirected into the junior and senior high school programs (Call, 1971).

The rationale for work experience, with pay, for the potential and actual dropout had two basic facets: (a) the capacity to generate income provides sufficient motivation to many students to remain in school when they might otherwise drop out, and (b) the working student develops a practical understanding of the financial value of formal education. In addition, from an administrative standpoint, the utilization of off-campus student placement frees classroom space otherwise required for the working student (Kaufman and Lewis, 1972).

The Job Upgrading Project. The Job Upgrading Project, funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was a voluntary program designed to aid in the educational and occupational adjustment of students, sixteen through twenty years of age, who were potential dropouts. The rationale of the program required that the student's goals come first, not pre-ordained, superimposed goals from the project. The student voluntarily applied for acceptance in the project and was interviewed by a teacher and project coordinator. The purpose of the interview was to attempt to determine what needs of the student could be met through the assistance of the

project. If the student then desired to request enrollment and was accepted, he and the coordinator decided which components of the Job Upgrading curriculum would best help him to achieve his goals, which then became the project objectives for this particular individual. There were fifteen centers in various high schools located throughout Detroit (McCarthy, 1970).

Flexibility and recognition of the student as an individual with specific needs are common denominators of most dropout prevention programs and the Job Upgrading Project is no exception. The dropout (actual or potential) is a student who has failed to adjust satisfactorily to the regular academic curriculum, and as such is in need, at least for the short-term, of a more personally relevant course of study if he is to remain or return to school of his own accord. A voluntary program has the additional advantages of avoiding the coercive aspects of compulsory education (Marland, 1972).

Operation Young Adults. Operation Young Adults was a combined work-study program for potential and actual high school dropouts, designed to demonstrate the relationship between education and the world of work. During Phase One, the program served a total of 532 students, aged 14 through 21, of whom 110 had already dropped out

of traditional high school setting. The objectives of the program were: (a) to assist actual dropouts and dropout-prone youth in understanding the relationship between education and work, (b) to test the feasibility of a joint educational approach utilizing trade instructors and academic teachers, (c) to develop a work-related curriculum, (d) to develop a process for transferring earnings into the regular school system (Rochester Jobs, 1971).

#### Summary of the Chapter

The literature reviewed in this chapter indicated that the need for dropout prevention programs has been recognized. Different approaches to this problem have been employed on an experimental basis by various school systems in other parts of the nation. California, however, is notable for attempting to implement such a program on a statewide basis. Unlike the locally developed curricula of other drop-out prevention programs, the Opportunity Program is designed to serve a variety of educational settings. As such, the mandated guidelines are broad in scope and are lacking in procedure for evaluation. This study explores the fundamental issue of whether the Opportunity Program, in fact, enables students to successfully reestablish themselves in the regular school program.

This study also profiled the Opportunity Program as observed in a five percent sample of California public school districts offering the program at the secondary level.

The procedures employed in this investigation are described in the next chapter. This description includes the selection of the sample, the measures used, the descriptive designs, and the descriptive analysis.



### Chapter 3

#### PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The procedures employed in conducting this investigation are presented in detail in this chapter. The following steps were utilized in gathering the data necessary for the study: (a) selection of the sample, (b) selection and administration of measurement criteria, (c) the descriptive design, and (d) the descriptive analysis.

##### Selection of the Sample

The original sample of sixty-two school districts was selected from a list provided by California State Department of Education personnel indicating 124 school districts offering an Opportunity Program at the high school level. A table of random numbers (Haber and Runyon, 1972) was employed in making this selection. Six school districts were subsequently selected from the original sample to serve the revised purpose of this study. This second selection was based upon a representative sampling of educational communities in California in terms of size, location, and socio-economic composition, as well as accessibility for on-site visitation.

The sample providing primary source information

in this study included the following in each of the six selected school districts: (a) the administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program at the school district level, (b) the administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program at each individual high school, (c) the Opportunity Program staff at each high school, and (d) the Opportunity Program students at each of these high schools. Supplemental data on the performance of past Opportunity Program students upon completing the program are also included where pertinent to the purpose of the study.

#### Selection and Administration of Measurement Criteria

The basic instrument used in this study was an "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" (Appendix). This tool was developed specifically for the study and was refined with the assistance of Opportunity Program teachers in a local school district. In its final form the survey contained ten questions, nine of which requested the participant to describe the Opportunity Program in his school district and one of which solicited his opinion in regard to factors contributing to program success. The descriptive portion of the questionnaire was in multiple choice and short answer form and included the process for student selection, teacher-student ratio, teacher preparation, auxiliary services, administrative support,

physical facilities, program focus, classroom procedures, and student evaluation procedures.

As originally conceived, the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" was intended to provide information of a descriptive nature, which was to be compared to evaluative data generated by other instruments. As the focus of the study shifted from evaluative to descriptive, the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" became the primary instrument.

The "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" was used in the revised study to provide uniform structure to all interviews. As such, it contributed to the collection of comparable data from each of the school districts in the study. Additional information pertinent to individual Opportunity Programs was also recorded and reported.

Interviews with school district personnel and on-site campus visitations were arranged by telephone through the school district offices and the office of the principal of each school. One day was spent with each school district in the study, with the exception of two days spent with a rural school district in which the secondary schools were so far apart as to make it impossible to complete the visitation in a single day.

The interviews with the administrators responsible for the Opportunity Program at the school district level were intended to determine the district's role in program

development, policy formation, and active continuing support. In addition, they were designed to ascertain the basic attitude of the school district toward the Opportunity Program.

The focus of the interviews with the principals and vice-principals responsible for the Opportunity Program at the individual high schools was to determine how the program was functioning in practice. It was from these individuals that the bulk of the information presented in this study was gathered, including specific data as to the rate of successful return of Opportunity Program students to regular classes at each school.

Data relative to impressions gained from working with the Opportunity Program were elicited from Opportunity Program teachers and teacher-aides. Data collected from these individuals pertained primarily to curriculum design and implementation.

Opportunity Program students were interviewed individually to determine the reason for their placement in the program and their reaction to the program. The structure of the interviews allowed the students to express themselves freely, thereby providing an additional perspective on the value of the program.

### The Descriptive Design

The descriptive design in this study was intended to display the quantifiable data collected in both narrative and tabular form. This description presents demographic data and portrays elements of commonality and diversity among the individual programs comprising the sample of this study. The overall purpose of this design was to draw a composite description of the Opportunity Program as represented by the sample.

The sample in this study represents a wide cross-section of the socio-economic strata of California public school districts. Data supporting this contention are presented as a part of the demography. Each school district and individual school visited is described in terms of size, community served, and program offered. In addition, each area of measurement included in the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet" is summarized. Finally, supplemental information collected during the course of the investigation is presented.

### The Descriptive Analysis

An analysis of the data is presented concurrent with its introduction. Since this is a descriptive study, the analysis is limited to that which can be determined from a compilation of the available data. There are no

assumptions associated with this study, as this was an initial investigation into a program with no published guidelines.

The data are analyzed in terms of how close the Opportunity Program comes to meeting its legislated mandate that ". . . the program shall be constructed with a view to the improvement of the pupil and his restoration, as soon as practicable, to regular school and regular class which he would, if not so assigned, be required to attend" (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973). The data are also analyzed in terms of factors which seem to be contributing to the success of the program in each of the school districts included in the study in an effort to establish general recommendations for Opportunity Program improvement.

### Summary

The procedures outlined in this chapter were intended to ensure an orderly approach to the gathering, compilation, and presentation of the data needed to complete this investigation. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was two-fold. The first purpose was to determine if the Opportunity Program in the State of California was meeting its stated objective. This objective is that, ". . . the program shall be constructed with a view to the improvement of the pupil and his restoration, as soon as practicable, to regular school and regular class which . . . he would be required to attend" (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973). The second purpose was to establish a composite profile of the program based upon the sample selected. The following format was used in presenting the findings of the investigation: (a) a description of the sample, (b) the results of the interviews, and (c) a summary of the findings.

#### Description of the Sample

The sample for this study was comprised of the six California public school districts representing a five percent selection of the Opportunity Program at the secondary level. A description of the program in each of

these districts is presented in this section.

School District A. School District A was a large, urban school district located in Central California, with an average daily attendance of 53,040, and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$915.21. The Opportunity Program shared a facility with the Continuation Education Program, but the two programs functioned independently of each other. There were 260 students enrolled in the Opportunity Program, which was staffed by one administrator, twelve teachers, nine teacher-aides, one counselor, and one social worker. There were no Opportunity Program classes in any of the comprehensive high schools in the school district.

The Opportunity Program had been in existence in this district for six years. During the first two years the program successfully returned twenty-nine percent of its yearly enrollment to regular school, but during the subsequent four years an influx of students referred from classes for the educationally handicapped reduced this rate of successful return to an average of seventeen percent, according to the school principal. All of the students were evaluated at the end of the fall semester by their teachers and administrative staff members. Those considered able to function successfully in the regular program



were returned to the comprehensive high schools in their attendance area for the spring semester. All students enrolled in the Opportunity Program were scheduled to return to regular classes at the start of the following school year.

The site administrator was also the person responsible for the Opportunity Program at the district level, as the entire program was contained in one facility. He performed general administrative duties including teacher selection, curriculum development, budgeting, and plant management. He also worked directly with students in such matters as tardiness, truancy, and problems of adjustment.

The faculty was comprised of teachers who were selected for their interest in the program and for their ability to work with predelinquent adolescents as perceived by the site administrator. Younger teachers were preferred, as it was felt that they were able to establish rapport more readily with these students. Faculty turnover was slight, with most of the faculty members having been with the program since its inception. Three teachers who left were replaced with former teacher aides who completed teaching credential requirements while working in the program.

Students were deemed appropriate candidates for

placement in the Opportunity Program if they had behavior or truancy problems in their schools of regular attendance. Students were not selected on the basis of need for remedial instruction, as remediation was felt to be beyond the scope of the program. The curriculum was one-half academic and one-half activity oriented. Activities were directed toward expanding student interest and included many field trips, with excursions to such places as Squaw Valley and San Francisco being common. Other activities centered around the development of manual skills and included shop classes, model building, and sewing.

The school was funded under the necessary small school formula, which permits an additional assessment of ten cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation of property within a unified school district for the funding of an Opportunity Program (California Education Code, Section 20800, 1973). The racial balance of the school reflected that of the community: thirty percent black, twenty percent brown, and fifty percent white and other.

School District B. School District B was a medium size, suburban school district located in Northern California, with an average daily attendance of 12,944, and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$826.80. The Opportunity Program was comprised of two classes housed within one of

the two comprehensive high schools in the school district. There were twenty-eight students enrolled in the Opportunity Program. The program was staffed by two teachers and two teacher-aides.

The Opportunity Program had been in existence in this school district for three years and had been able to return an average of five percent of its yearly enrollment to regular classes. The remainder of the students stayed in the Opportunity Program until they reached the age of sixteen, at which time they transferred to Continuation Education.

The Director of Special Education was the district administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program. He spoke enthusiastically about the program, and indicated that he was actively involved in working with the Opportunity Program teachers in the area of curriculum development. He stated that he was firmly committed to maintaining a maximum class size of fourteen students, retaining the teacher aides, and creating a more vocationally oriented program. He stated that he knew little about the Opportunity Program as it existed in other school districts.

The principal of the school professed to know little about the Opportunity Program and deferred to one of

his vice-principals for administrative input to this study. The vice-principal interviewed felt that the program was working as intended (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973), low rate of return to regular classes notwithstanding. He thought that the program should be expanded in size to include more students needing the services it provided and expanded in curricular scope to include vocational instruction; however, lack of space and financial resources precluded both. He indicated that he would also like to see the program removed from the regular school campus and housed in a special facility.

Both instructors were on their first teaching assignment. They conducted their classes independently of each other even though they were situated in adjoining rooms; however, plans for the future included a certain amount of team teaching and regrouping of students for such electives as home economics and small engine repair.

Students were enrolled in the Opportunity Program by a selection committee consisting of an administrative representative from each of the two high schools in the district, the school psychologist, the school counselors, the Opportunity Program teachers, and the school nurse. Criteria for student placement were consistent with guidelines established by the California State Legislature

(California Education Code, Section 6500, 1973). The students interviewed indicated that their primary complaint was mandatory physical education, although they enjoyed recreational activities such as volleyball, softball, and ping-pong included in the Opportunity Program curriculum. All students were scheduled to study English, social studies, mathematics, and driver education, but academic performance was minimal.

The Opportunity Program had an annual budget of \$200.00. This supplemental funding was used to purchase additional educational materials pertinent to the needs of the program. There were no students belonging to ethnic minority groups enrolled in the Opportunity Program in this school district.

School District C. School District C was a large urban school district located in the San Francisco Bay Area, with an average daily attendance of 59,366, and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$1,317.24. The Opportunity Program shared two separate facilities with the district Continuation Education Program and was also offered at four of the six comprehensive high schools in the district. There was a total of 176 students enrolled in the Opportunity Program. The program at each of the two separate facilities was staffed by one full-time teacher,

three part-time teachers, a teacher-aide, a clerk, and an occasional student-teacher or intern teacher. Administration and a full-time psychometrist were shared with the Continuation Education Program. The Opportunity Programs at the comprehensive high schools were staffed by a team of two teachers at each of the two smaller schools.

The Opportunity Program had been in existence in this district for four years. Less than two percent of the yearly enrollment in the Opportunity Program at the separate facilities returned to regular school and regular classes. Very few of those students returned were able to succeed, according to the school principals. Approximately one-third of the yearly enrollment in the Opportunity Program at the comprehensive high schools returned successfully to regular classes. Those students not returned successfully to regular classes by the age of sixteen were enrolled in Continuation Education.

The school district had a full-time Opportunity Program Coordinator who was responsible for program development and overall supervision. She felt that the Opportunity Program should be expanded at the elementary level to provide services to students in need before they reached the secondary level and developed more rigid

behavior patterns. She also felt that the Opportunity Program and the Educationally Handicapped Program must be maintained separately, with neither becoming a repository for the failures of the other, if either was to be successful.

Opportunity teachers were chosen for their demonstrated teaching abilities in the fields of English and social studies as well as their willingness to work toward improving student behavior. The curricular emphasis was on remediation, especially in the area of reading skills. The instruction was individualized and tailored to the academic and psychological needs of the students as prescribed by the school psychometrist.

Students were referred to the Opportunity Program by the vice-principals at their schools of regular attendance. The vice-principals decided whether the students would attend the Opportunity Program at the regular school campus or at one of the separate facilities. There were no district guidelines for this decision and the vice-principals admitted that it was subjective, based upon personal appraisal of student needs. One of the separate facilities was located in a low income neighborhood but served a student body reflective of the socio-economic balance of the entire district. Its curriculum emphasized vocational training in the fields of respiration therapy,

merchandise handling, directory assistance, banking, and clerical training. The other separate facility was located in a middle class neighborhood and served middle and upper class students. Its curriculum was more traditional with primary emphasis being on academic study. Eighteen percent of the students at the second school had been identified as being mentally gifted.

The Opportunity Program at the comprehensive high schools received a supplemental funding of seven dollars per student from the district. The program at the separate facilities received a supplemental funding of twenty-two dollars per student, seven dollars from the district and fifteen dollars from the state as provided by the necessary small school formula (California Education Code, Section 10800, 1973).

School District D. School District D was a small, rural school district located immediately east of the San Francisco Bay area, with an average daily attendance of 1,150 and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$1,398.14. The Opportunity Program was housed in a portable classroom located on the comprehensive high school campus. There were nineteen students enrolled in the Opportunity Program, with a staff consisting of one teacher and one teacher-aide.



The Opportunity Program had been in existence in this school district for three years. According to school records, approximately one-third returned to regular classes, one-third transferred to Continuation Education, and one-third dropped out of school. Ten percent of the students who enrolled in the Opportunity Program were successful in school upon return to regular classes.

The high school principal was also the administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program at the district level, as the entire program consisted of one class. He was instrumental in the development of the Opportunity Program in the school district and met on a regular basis with the teacher to discuss the progress of the students enrolled in the program. The principal was also responsible for the decision to move the Opportunity Program into a separate facility with Continuation Education for the next school year, a decision predicated upon his conclusion that both programs would be able to benefit from the combined resources they would be able to generate.

The Opportunity Program teacher in this school district had requested assignment to the program when it was initiated. He had previously been the first Continuation Education teacher in the school district and prior to that had taught science for twenty years. He perceived himself to be primarily a counselor and student advocate and

secondarily a teacher. This perception was shared and encouraged by the school principal. The teacher-aide was a middle-aged woman whose work consisted mainly of performing clerical duties.

The Opportunity Program served the dropout student who had previously exhausted all of the other rehabilitative resources the school had to offer. The curriculum was one-third academic, one-third discussion related to films shown, and one-third activities. The academic portion was comprised of individualized instruction using programmed materials in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The films were selected by the students from the catalogs of educational film libraries and encompassed a variety of subjects. The activities included parlor games, outdoor recreation, and field trips. Students were initially enrolled in the Opportunity Program for half of the school day. The remainder of the day they were required to stay away from the school campus. As they showed signs of improvement, they were placed in regular classes of their own choice. The students were responsible for their own course scheduling and had to secure permission to enroll from the teachers of each of the classes they wished to join.

The Opportunity Program in this district had an

annual supplemental funding of \$400.00 which was used to purchase special educational and recreational supplies, rent films, and finance field trips. There were no students belonging to ethnic minority groups enrolled in the Opportunity Program in this school district, which reflects the low enrollment of minority students in the district.

School District E. School District E was a small rural school district located in the San Joaquin Delta with an average daily attendance of 2,484, and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$1,658.04. The Opportunity Program was combined with Continuation Education with no differentiation between the two programs. This program was comprised of one class at each of the two high schools in the school district. There was a total of thirty-nine students enrolled in the program, which was staffed by one teacher and one teacher-aide at each school.

The Opportunity Program had been in existence in its present form for four years. Previously it had been housed with Continuation Education in a separate facility. Approximately seventy-five percent of the students enrolled in the program graduated from high school, but less than five percent were able to return to regular classes and succeed without continued active contact with the Oppor-

tunity Program. Thirty-five to forty percent of the students were able to perform satisfactory work in one or more regular classes.

The district administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program was the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Programs. He refused to be interviewed, claiming that he was under criticism from the district principals for not providing sufficient service, and in attempting to alleviate this condition had no time to spare.

The first school visited in this district was a comprehensive high school of 1,200 students. The principal of the school had delegated full responsibility for the Opportunity Program to the teacher, who was also: (1) the Director of Student Activities, (2) the Coordinator of Data Processing, (3) a consultant to the county Regional Occupational Program (4) the golf coach, (5) the work experience supervisor, and (6) the careers counselor. He had twenty-seven years of teaching experience and was fully credentialed in the areas of pupil-personnel services and school administration. As such he performed all teaching, counseling, psychometric, and administrative functions for a completely self-contained class. The teacher-aide was a middle aged woman who did the clerical work and taught

the girls cooking, knitting and sewing.

Students were referred directly to the Opportunity Program by their counselors on the basis of an established difficulty in adjusting to the regular program. The program curriculum was oriented toward academic remediation and career planning. Psychometric tests were used to diagnose student needs and prescribe individual courses of study.

The Opportunity Program received a supplemental funding of one hundred dollars per school year. The racial balance of the Opportunity Program was reflective of the entire student body, which was ninety-eight percent white.

The second school visited in this district was a small high school of 400 students. The principal of the school was responsible for selection of students for the Opportunity Program as well as for evaluation of students enrolled in the program for return to regular classes.

The Opportunity Program at this school was staffed by a first year teacher whose previous professional experience was limited to having taught physical education in a mental hospital. The primary educational tool he had in his classroom was a complex rat laboratory. The students used the rats to conduct behavior modification experiments. The teacher hoped there would be some transfer of learning

from the rats to the students. Additional activities included the construction of stereophonic sound equipment and the development of an extensive vegetable garden. A survival hike in the Sierra Nevada Mountains had been planned by the teacher, but did not meet with student acceptance. The teacher-aide was an elderly gentlemen whose duties appeared to be basically janitorial.

The Opportunity Program in this school received a supplemental funding of \$1,000.00 per year. The racial composition of the high school was eighty-five percent white; there was one ethnic minority student in the Opportunity Program.

School District F. School District F was a medium sized suburban school district located in Central California, with an average daily attendance of 10,639, and an annual per pupil expenditure of \$829.13. The Opportunity Program was housed in a brightly painted portable classroom located toward the rear of the comprehensive high school campus. There were forty students enrolled in the program, which was staffed by two teachers, one teacher-aide, and four student teachers.

The Opportunity Program had been in existence in this district for four years. Ninety-five percent of the students enrolled in the program graduated from high school

but less than five percent returned to regular classes on a full-time basis.

The administrator responsible for the Opportunity Program at the school district level was the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. He was actively involved in working with the program on campus at least one day a week. He assisted the teachers in planning curriculum and resolving problems with parents which were beyond their expertise. He spoke highly of the Opportunity Program, stating that staff relationships were good and that the program was generally well received in the school district.

The school principal considered the Opportunity Program to be an alternative for those students who were disinterested in the traditional high school curriculum. His involvement with the Opportunity Program consisted of curriculum development oriented less toward academic structure and more toward improving social relationships and vocational planning.

Both instructors were on their first teaching assignment, one having been with the program since its inception and the other having been with the program for just one year. They indicated a firm commitment to a student-centered curriculum, allowing students to propose their own courses of study which were subject to approval and modi-

fication by the staff. The teacher-aide performed clerical functions, while the student teachers worked as tutors to individual students under the close supervision of the regular instructors.

Students were referred to the Opportunity Program by teachers, counselors, or vice-principals. Formal enrollment was by student request following personal investigation of the program. Students wrote learning contracts with the assistance of the staff to indicate the subjects they intended to study. Their academic performance was then evaluated in accordance with the criteria established by the contract. Numerous field trips were scheduled, most of which were based on ideas developed by the students. A projected trip to the San Diego Zoo was financed by a series of class fund raising projects which generated enough income to include a visit to the Grand Canyon.

An additional feature that made this Opportunity Program unique was its Breakfast Club. Every Friday morning the class prepared and consumed an elaborate breakfast which frequently was augmented by spontaneous student speeches on contemporary issues. The Breakfast Club was originally conceived by the staff as a parody on the community service clubs, but so so enthusiastically received by the students that it became a regular part of the program.



Table 1

## Summary of Sample Data

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
School District ADA	53,040	12,944	59,366	1,150	2,484	10,639
Annual School District Funding per Pupil	\$915.21	\$826.80	\$1,317.24	\$1,398.14	\$1,658.04	\$829.13
Number of Pupils in Opportunity Program	260	28	176	26	39	40
Number of Certified Staff in Opportunity Program	15	2	8	1	2	2
Number of Paraprofessionals in Opportunity Program	9	2	10	1	2	4
Number of Years Opportunity Program has Existed	6	3	4	3	4	4
Percentage Rate of Return to Regular Classes	17%	5%	20%	33%	5%	5%
Supplemental Funding	\$1,800.00	\$400.00	\$1,650.00	\$400.00	\$1,100.00	\$400.00

The Opportunity Program in this school district received a supplemental funding of \$400.00 per year with additional funds available for special projects. Parents frequently contributed toward meeting field trip expenses. The racial composition of the high school student body was ninety-five percent white and there were no ethnic minority students in the Opportunity Program.

### Results of the Interviews

Each interview was structured along the questions included in the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet." This structure allowed the gathering of quantitative and subjective data on common elements of Opportunity Program design in each school district. The results are presented under ten headings, each representing a category on the "Opportunity Program Profile Sheet."

Student Selection Process. Since the Opportunity Program is totally referral by design, each school district must establish a policy for student selection and a procedure for student enrollment. A summary of the criteria and personnel responsible for student selection is presented in Table 2. A summary of the enrollment procedures is presented in Table 3.

One of the problems encountered in determining criteria for student selection was that many school districts were unable to determine whether poor attendance was res-

possible for poor academic performance, or poor academic performance was responsible for poor attendance. Two school districts were reluctant to use the Opportunity Program for remediation, feeling that it was intended to treat truancy and behavior problems. Four districts felt that the need for remediation was the cause of many truancy and behavior problems and that it therefore should be the thrust of the Opportunity Program.

Although only one school district had a screening committee, all agreed that one would improve their Opportunity Program. They felt that a screening committee would permit the establishment of requirements for student enrollment in the Opportunity Program, would deny the inclusion of any student whose presence might be detrimental to others, and would not allow the Opportunity Program to become a repository for unwanted students.

Table 2

Summary of the Criteria and Personnel  
Responsible for Student Selection

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Academic Record			X			
Attendance Record	X	X		X	X	X

Table 2 (continued)  
Summary of the Criteria and Personnel  
Responsible for Student Selection

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Counselor Referral		X		X	X	X
Teacher Referral		X				X
Principal/Dean Referral	X		X	X	X	X
Parent/Student Referral					X	X
Other*	1	2				

\* 1 - Hearing Officer, 2 - School Nurse

Table 3  
Summary of the Student Enrollment Procedures

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Direct Referral	X		X	X	X	X
Screening Committee		X				
Psychometric Testing			X		X	
Parental Involvement		X	X	X	X	

Teacher-Student Ratio. The teacher-student ratio ranged from 1:12 to 1:25. Some adjustment is necessary in analysis of these figures, however, as the three lowest ratios reflect Opportunity Programs in which the students were enrolled for half a day and the program staff had other assignments for the rest of the school day.

Table 4

## Summary of Teacher-Student Ratio

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Number of Students per Teacher	22	14*	12*	19	14*/25	20

\* Half-day Opportunity Program

Teacher Preparation. The Opportunity Program appeared to attract teachers who were either at the beginning or at the end of their careers. Disregarding the separate Opportunity Schools, the sample was comprised of two teachers who had been in the profession for well over twenty years and five teachers who were on their first assignment. The faculties at the two separate Opportunity Schools reflected a similar phenomenon, although not

quite so strongly articulated.

Table 5

Summary of Teacher Preparation Data

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Academic Major(s)						
Teacher 1	Hist.	Psych.	Eng.	Sci.	Bus.	Eng.
Teacher 2	Art	Math.	Sci.		P.E.	Psych.
Degree(s) Held						
Teacher 1	M.A.	B.A.	M.A.	B.A.	B.A.	B.A.
Teacher 2	B.A.	B.A.	M.A.		M.A.	M.A.
Credential(s) Held*						
Years Teaching						
Teacher 1	4	2	12	25	27	4
Teacher 2	2	1	13		1	1
Years Opportunity						
Teacher 1	4	2	4	3	4	4
Teacher 2	2	1	3		1	1

\* All teachers held secondary teaching credentials. Teacher 1 in School District E also held a pupil-personnel services credential and an administrative credential.

Advanced degrees and supplemental credentials carried a low priority with this sample. Only those teachers in the school district of closest proximity to the Berkeley campus of the University of California showed any active interest in pursuing further formal education.

Only one teacher in the sample had any professional experience other than teaching. This individual had performed a variety of functions in the fields of pupil-personnel services and school administration, but had never been classified as anything other than a teacher.

Auxiliary Services Regularly Rendering Assistance.

All of the Opportunity Programs in the sample had some auxiliary assistance on a regular basis beyond that provided to the general school population. For the purposes of this study, a regular basis was considered to be one hour per week or more. Auxiliary assistance consisted of administrative supervision, psychological consultation, general pupil services, health services, tutorial assistance, and clerical functions. All of the teacher-aides were either college graduates or current college students.

Table 6

Summary of Auxiliary Services

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Administrative		X		X		X
Psychiatric				X		

Table 6 (continued)

## Summary of Auxiliary Services

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Psychological		X				X
Counseling		X		X	X	X
Teacher-Aide	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Teacher			X			
Clerk			X			
School Nurse		X				
Social Worker	X					

Administrative Support. All Opportunity Programs in the study characterized administrative support as strong or adequate. All of the administrators interviewed indicated that they were supportive of the program. It is of interest to note in this study that administrative support was not equated with funding. The two schools in School District E had the highest and lowest supplemental funding in the study, \$100.00 per year and \$1,000.00 per year respectively. The first considered the administrative support strong, the second considered administrative support



adequate. Administrative support, as perceived by the Opportunity Program staff seemed to be more closely equated with personal commitment and ongoing, active involvement on the part of the administration.

Table 7

Teacher Impressions of Administrative Support

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Strong	X	X	X		X	X
Adequate		X		X	X	
Weak						

Facilities. The Opportunity Programs comprising this study were uniformly housed in facilities of at least the same quality as the regular classes in their respective school districts. The two school districts in this study operating separate Opportunity Schools had established their programs in facilities of better quality than their regular schools. Two of the four school districts maintaining Opportunity Programs on their comprehensive high school campuses intended to transfer their programs to off-campus

facilities for the next school year. A third school district was investigating the practicality of doing the same thing in the near future.

Table 8  
Opportunity Program Facilities

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Regular Classroom		X	X			
Special Room					X	
Separate Building				X	X	X
Off-Campus	X		X			

Classroom Procedures. Opportunity Program classroom procedures varied widely, as might be expected in a situation where there were no curricular guidelines. Only one class was observed in which a teacher was attempting to formally present subject matter to the entire group in a traditional manner, and this appeared to meet with considerable student resistance. Perhaps in recognition of the reaction of this type of student to conventional teaching methods, the remainder of the classes visited were relying upon individualized instruction. Typically, the teacher

would present just enough material on a subject to catch the students' interest and then allow the students to continue on at their own pace. Most Opportunity Program teachers seemed willing to give credit for anything constructive produced by the students. The students, for the most part, seemed to appreciate the academic freedom and used it responsibly.

Table 9  
Summary of Classroom Procedures

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Individualized Instruction	X	X	X	X	X	X
Programmed Materials		X	X	X	X	
Counseling; Individual	X					
Group				X	X	X
Parent		X	X			X

Student Evaluation Procedures. There were two aspects of student evaluation in the Opportunity Program. The first involved an evaluation of student performance in school. The second involved an evaluation of the student

for possible return to regular school and/or regular classes.

Evaluation of student performance in school was made by the teacher in five of the six districts visited. In the sixth district (District F) the student evaluated his own performance in conference with the teacher. In the Opportunity Classes within comprehensive high schools the teachers wrote a formal evaluation of each student every two or three weeks. This evaluation covered attendance, behavior, and academic performance. In the separate Opportunity Schools the teachers were more concerned with evaluation of academic performance and the administrative staff wrote attendance and behavior records. In all instances observed the evaluation was individualized with no comparison to group or arbitrary norms. Students were evaluated solely in terms of their own progress.

Evaluation of the student for return to regular school and/or regular classes was considered to be a more complex matter. Students might have done well in the Opportunity Program, yet might not be prepared to accept the personal responsibility involved in attending regular classes. Evaluating students in terms of how they might be expected to perform in a different environment was felt to be very different.

The Opportunity Programs at comprehensive high schools evaluated students for possible return to regular

classes by allowing them to try adding one class at a time. One district visited required the student to assume the responsibility for arranging his own return to regular classes. He had to approach the regular class teacher and convince the teacher that he was prepared to meet the demands of the class.

Opportunity Programs at separate facilities had a more difficult time evaluating students for possible return to regular school, in that there was no way to try a student in regular classes while still keeping him enrolled in the Opportunity School. In order to be scheduled in regular classes the student first had to be formally transferred to regular school.

One of the two school districts in this study maintaining a separate Opportunity School evaluated the entire student body at the conclusion of the fall semester. Those students deemed likely to succeed were returned to regular school. This evaluation included a review of academic performance, school attendance and disciplinary referrals. The entire student body remaining was then returned to regular school at the conclusion of the spring semester to begin the next year in regular classes.

The other school district in this study maintaining a separate Opportunity School considered its program to

be terminal and did not actively encourage students to return to regular school. As such, there was no regular evaluation of students for return to regular school. Those students who wished to return to regular school had to initiate the process themselves.

#### Factors Which Contribute to Opportunity Program

Success. Each teacher interviewed was asked to indicate four factors contributing to Opportunity Program success. The results are summarized in Table 10. It is important to note that these factors were not chosen from a supplied list, but were generated by the teachers themselves. They are presented in the order of importance accorded them by the Opportunity Program teachers interviewed. One additional factor mentioned by several teachers as having potential for improving their program was to have some knowledge of what other Opportunity Programs in other parts of the state were like.

The need for remedial instruction, especially in the field of reading, was felt to be the most important component in a majority of the Opportunity Programs visited. It was felt by the Opportunity Program teachers that students who could not read their assignments in regular classes could not hope to do satisfactory work and were therefore prone to truancy and deviant behavior.

Table 10

## Factors Which Contribute to Opportunity Program Success

Category	School District					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Remedial Instruction	X	X	X	X		
Field Trips	X			X	X	X
Selection Committee	X	X	X			
Vocational Education		X	X		X	
Teacher-Aides	X					X
Small Class Size		X		X		
Psychometric Testing			X		X	
Counseling Environment				X		X
Immediate Attention					X	X

Field trips were seen by their advocates as interest expanding activities and as providing an added dimension in student motivation. One Opportunity Program visited was having considerable success with field trips to a nearby state university campus. Students initially toured the campus, on subsequent trips visiting some classes. As a result some of the Opportunity Program students were auditing university classes and were planning to enroll

upon graduation from high school.

The concept of a selection committee was strongly favored by the staff of the two separate Opportunity Schools and the on-campus Opportunity Program at the largest of the comprehensive high schools in the study. It was felt in these schools that a selection committee was necessary to protect the Opportunity Program from being contaminated with hardcore delinquent students who not only would fail to realize any benefit from the program, but would also be likely to make it difficult for other students enrolled in the program to succeed.

Vocational education was favored in several school districts because it provided the student with an alternative learning experience, while at the same time it prepared him for possible employment. One school district in this study incorporated career planning with vocational education and was able to place many Opportunity Program students in work experience assignments in the community.

All of the Opportunity Programs visited had teacher-aides. Some teacher-aides performed actual teaching duties, while others were limited to clerical work. Although teacher-aides were considered to be a value in all programs visited, they were not well paid for the services they rendered, according to the school administrators. The



pay range was \$2.63 to \$3.00 per hour.

All of the Opportunity Programs visited had an initial maximum class size of fifteen students. Some districts had adhered to this limit, while others had not. The Opportunity Programs in this study had a class size twenty to fifty percent smaller than the average secondary school class size in their respective school districts.

Only two of the Opportunity Programs in this study had personnel available to perform regular psychometric testing. These two programs relied heavily upon test results for educational diagnosis and prescription. Other districts in the study mentioned that they would like to have some psychometric service, but none was available.

Two of the districts had established a very definite counseling environment in their Opportunity Program facility and made considerable use of it in attempting to facilitate student adjustment to school. One program used the counseling environment to supplement the academic portion of the curriculum and the other program used it to supplant the academic portion of the curriculum. The counseling environment in both districts consisted of rugs, couches, easy chairs, music, and staff with whom to talk.

Immediacy of attention to student needs was recognized by all personnel interviewed as a primary

function of the Opportunity Program. This was insured to some extent by the basic format of the program. Two districts believed that this was the key to their success. They felt that immediate attention to student needs helped to resolve problems before they became serious.

### Summary of the Findings

The Opportunity Program appeared to be failing in more instances than it was succeeding if measured against its legislative mandate to return students to regular classes. The question then becomes one of whether the program is a failure if a majority of the students fail to meet the stated objective. Although the data as presented indicates that far less than half the students enrolled in the Opportunity Program returned to regular classes, more than half managed to graduate from some type of secondary school.

The Opportunity Program, as represented by the sample selected for this study, had considerable diversity. The Program was generally well supported by the school district in terms of personnel, facilities, and equipment. Personnel involved with the program appeared competent in their fields and dedicated to the program, the only shortcoming being a lack of professional experience in some instances. There was some physical separation of the

Opportunity Program in all districts from the rest of the academic community, either by housing the program off-campus in its own building or else by locating it on the periphery of the comprehensive high school grounds; however, Opportunity Program classes uniformly had facilities as good or better than the regular secondary school classes in their respective school districts. Supplies appeared to be plentiful, both traditional school supplies and special academic and recreational supplies that were appropriate to the needs of the program.

An interpretation of the finding reported in this chapter is presented in Chapter 5, the final chapter. In addition, recommendations are offered for further research based upon the results of this investigation.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is organized into five sections: in the first four sections, conclusions and interpretations are presented relative to the data reported in Chapter 4, regarding (a) Opportunity Program administration, (b) Opportunity Program curriculum, (c) Opportunity Program success, and (d) summary and recommendations; on the basis of these conclusions and interpretations, recommendations for further study are presented in the fifth section. The investigator recognizes the danger in drawing final conclusions from a single study, and urges the reader to observe the same caution in reading the contents of this chapter.

#### Opportunity Program Administration

The Opportunity Program shares administrative services with the California public school system of which it is a part. This, in theory, includes service from the State Department of Education, the local school district, and the individual school. This, in practice, is happening only partially.

The commitment of the California State Department

of Education to the Opportunity Program appears to be minimal. Only one person at the state level could be identified as being associated with the program and this person has indicated that his contribution to date has been to develop a listing of the school districts offering an Opportunity Program during the 1972-1973 school year. Perhaps one of the most important shortcomings in the administration of the Opportunity Program is the failure of the State Department of Education to provide direction in statewide unification or coordination of the program. In conducting this study, the investigator was repeatedly asked what the Opportunity Program is like in other school districts. There is presently no central source which collects and distributes information for the improvement of the Opportunity Program.

Administrative service to the Opportunity Program at the school district level, while not consistent from one district to the next, far surpassed that offered by the state. In one-half of the school districts in this study the district administrators associated with the Opportunity Program were actively involved in the operation of the program. They not only provided consultive service to the program but also assisted the regular staff as needed in such matters as curriculum development and parental involve-

ment. In the other half of the school districts in this study the district administrators associated with the Opportunity Program were markedly less involved in the operation of the program, claiming for the most part to have too many other responsibilities to make a continuing commitment to one facet of their assignment. Only the largest school district in the study had a full-time district administrator assigned exclusively to the Opportunity Program. The evaluation of the input by the district administrators into the program was beyond the scope of this investigation; however, those Opportunity Programs receiving direct assistance from district administrators appeared to be functioning with greater direction.

The administrators at the individual schools were uniformly supportive of the Opportunity Program, although their degree of enthusiasm and involvement differed. The principal of the largest comprehensive high school included in this study had no working knowledge of the Opportunity Program at his school and the vice-principal, while supportive, felt that the program would do better off-campus. Perhaps the Opportunity Program requires more attention than a large school can afford, or perhaps there is too much student anonymity on a large school campus to give these students the individual treatment they need.

It would appear that the administration of the Opportunity Program, in terms of program operation, needs considerable improvement in one area. Specifically, this is the establishment of criteria for student selection for inclusion in the program. If the program is to help students prepare themselves for return to regular classes (California Education Code, Section 6501, 1973), then it is incumbent upon those responsible for the administration of the program to ensure that those students enrolled be capable of achieving this goal. It is not the intended responsibility of the Opportunity Program to serve as a holding facility for students not desired elsewhere; unfortunately, the data gathered for this study suggest that this is happening.

#### Opportunity Program Curriculum

The Opportunity Program seems to be in need of curriculum development. A basic problem in Opportunity Program design in the school districts included in this study is that the teachers were expected to motivate, remediate, and instruct in three or four secondary school subject areas. The problem was compounded by a lack of instructional materials specifically designed to meet the needs of the students served by this program. Perhaps in response to this situation, many Opportunity Program teachers present a

minimal academic curriculum and concentrate instead upon vocational or leisure pursuits. The programs in this study that have chosen to do so show a low rate of return to regular classes. It may well be that a comprehensive high school needs a non-academic curriculum for students who rebel against traditional instruction, but a non-academic curriculum does not satisfy the requirements of a program intended to return students successfully to regular classes of attendance.

Another problem faced by the Opportunity Program is the rigidity of the traditional comprehensive high school curriculum. In many regular classes students learn sequentially and cumulatively, with that which is to be learned predicated upon a working knowledge of that which was to have been learned previously. If a student is removed from his regular class of attendance and placed in the Opportunity Program as an alternative, it is usually because he was not attending class or learning the material being presented in his regular class of attendance. The goal of the Opportunity Program then becomes not only, as previously mentioned, to motivate, remediate, and instruct, but also to accomplish this rapidly enough to allow the student to return successfully to his regular class of attendance.



One possible alternative would be for the Opportunity Program staff to collect the curriculum materials used in the regular classes of attendance and provide personalized tutorial service to the students enrolled in the program. This was not observed in any of the schools visited, but was discussed during several of the interviews. The response indicated that while the idea may have merit, it would take considerable and continuous effort on the part of the Opportunity Program staff to keep current with the regular classes. Furthermore, it presupposes that the students enrolled in the Opportunity Program possess the basic capacity to master the subject matter being presented in the regular classes. An additional complication facing this design specifically and the Opportunity Program in general, is the very real possibility that the regular class teachers may be unwilling to cooperate out of fear of having difficult students return to their classes.

#### Opportunity Program Success

In two of the school districts in this study the goal of the Opportunity Program was to return students successfully to their regular classes of attendance as specified by the California Education Code (California Education Code, Section 6500, 1973). The rate of successful return in these school districts was twenty percent in

one and thirty-three percent in the other. In the remaining two school districts in this study the goal of the Opportunity Program was to provide an alternative educational experience with little or no emphasis upon returning students to regular classes. In these school districts the rate of successful return was zero to four percent.

Determining what constitutes a good rate of successful return to regular classes is difficult. The Opportunity Program, by definition, works with a student population not disposed toward the pursuit of academic excellence. Students enrolled in the Opportunity Program are students who are not succeeding in regular classes and would be failing their classes or would drop out without such a program. With this in mind, it does not seem reasonable to expect a high rate of successful return to regular classes of attendance. Whether twenty percent or thirty-three percent constitutes a reasonable rate of successful return can only be a subjective judgement at this juncture since no criteria for program evaluation have been developed.

If the twenty or thirty-three percent complete school and become responsible members of society as a direct result of having been in the Opportunity Program and if they would otherwise have dropped out of school and become dependents of society, then perhaps this rate of

return indicates a viable program. If, however, a portion of the twenty or thirty-three percent do not complete school or do not become responsible members of society having been in the Opportunity Program, or if some of them would have managed to re-establish themselves in school and become responsible members of society without having been in the Opportunity Program, then perhaps this rate of return warrants further investigation. The problem rests in determining which of these two alternatives more closely represents the situation.

While fewer than half of the students enrolled in the Opportunity Program in this study return successfully to regular classes, more than half graduate from high school. In terms of serving the needs of the student, perhaps the latter is more important than the former. In terms of meeting the legislative intent "to provide an opportunity for pupils . . . to resolve their problems and reestablish themselves for return to regular classes or regular schools as soon as practicable" (California Education Code, Section 6500, 1973), this phenomenon may not qualify the program as a successful venture.

The basic format of the Opportunity Programs observed seemed to be to provide the student with an alternative approach to education which he could accept to replace the

traditional approach which he could not accept. An inherent risk in such a design is that success will be measured by student acceptance. If the students like an alternative program and do well, it may be an indication that the program is meeting their needs, but it also may be an indication that the program has been developed with the primary intention of being attractive to the students with little concern for academic merit.

There existed, in the school districts comprising this study, a very definite trend toward combining the Opportunity Program with Continuation Education. Three of the six Opportunity Programs under investigation shared facilities with Continuation Education, with a fourth planning on doing so in the next school year. The remaining two school districts were evaluating such a change. It would appear that the combination of these two programs could result in more efficient administration and curriculum development for both. Possible negative effects would be a further reduction in rate of return to regular classes, with students instead remaining in the program and graduating from Continuation Education, and Opportunity Program students being adversely influenced by Continuation Education students, who are typically more delinquent.

### Summary and Recommendations

While the findings of this study do not indicate a high rate of successful return to regular classes of attendance, they do indicate that more than half of the students enrolled in the Opportunity Program achieve a level of academic success adequate to complete requirements for high school graduation. In addition, a majority of the students enrolled in the Opportunity Program do graduate from high school.

It is recommended that the legislative intent for the Opportunity Program be reviewed and modified to provide an alternative educational approach more in keeping with the needs of the students being served by the program. The present design prescribes short-term remediation or rehabilitation, while it appears that a majority of the students being served by the program exhibit symptoms of problems requiring long-term assistance. In conjunction with a revision of legislation affecting the Opportunity Program, a system of program evaluation should be developed and implemented in an on-going manner.

It is recommended that a uniform and enforceable system for selection of students for the Opportunity Program be developed, with definite criteria for what constitutes an Opportunity Program candidate and what will exclude a student from consideration for Opportunity Program placement.

In evaluating the student selection process, it is suggested that those students selected be assessed in terms of their likelihood of achieving the objectives of the program.

It is recommended that the California State Department of Education become more actively involved in the development of the Opportunity Program. The program is presently without direction beyond the school district level and the need for such direction appears to be acute.

It is recommended that professional preparation prerequisites be established for Opportunity Program personnel. These prerequisites should reflect the specialized needs of the students typically enrolled in the program. It is suggested that these prerequisites include, but not be limited to, preparation in the areas of remedial curriculum, educational counseling, and education of the exceptional child. Criteria for previous professional experience should also be considered for inclusion.

It is recommended that study be conducted to determine whether the Opportunity Program functions better as part of a comprehensive high school, or as a separate entity located in its own facility. In addition, it is recommended that study be conducted to determine the effects of interaction between Opportunity Program students and

Continuation Education students where both programs are located in the same facility.

It is recommended that a method be devised for follow-up on Opportunity Program students who transfer out of the program. This recommendation is intended both for program evaluation and also to maintain contact with students who are a high dropout risk.

Finally, it is recommended that efforts be continued and intensified to develop alternative instructional techniques that will allow each pupil to achieve in a manner commensurate with his abilities. This is a recommendation for focus on the learner and what he brings to the learning situation, rather than a focus on more new programs and materials.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The sample investigated in this study indicates a basic lack of Opportunity Program homogeneity. This is as might be expected with the present absence of program definition by the State. The data suggest a number of questions that need further exploration, and it is therefore recommended that the study be expanded to include a wider sample of school districts in order to confirm or deny the findings.

It is recommended that data be collected on a

number of pupil variables such as sex, race, academic ability, language facilities, interests, attitudes, family and other out of school factors in an effort to confirm or deny any relationship between these variables and success in attaining Opportunity Program goals. Similar data should be collected regarding Opportunity Program staff to investigate staff-pupil relationships.

It is recommended that data be collected as to Opportunity Program student selection criteria and that this data be compared with the rate of successful student return to classes of regular attendance. Care should be taken also to evaluate the advantages of using a selection committee for student referral to the program.

It is recommended that data be collected as to Opportunity Program curriculum offered by different school districts and that this data be compared with the rate of successful student return to classes of regular attendance. In connection with the recommendation, it is suggested that a method of follow-up be employed to enable a determination of what percentage of Opportunity Program students successfully returned to classes of regular attendance are able to graduate from high school.

Finally, it is recommended that a large sample of Opportunity Program students be interviewed to determine



what their expectations are of the Opportunity Program and whether these expectations are being met. It is further recommended that these expectations be compared for consistency with those of the school, the school district, and the State as expressed by the California Education Code.

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## APPENDIX

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## OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM PROFILE SHEET

School \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this profile sheet is to describe Opportunity Programs now in existence. Please check all appropriate choices in each question.

1. How are students selected for your Opportunity Program?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Academic record
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Attendance record
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Counselor referral
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. Teacher referral
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. Principal/Dean referral
  - \_\_\_\_\_ f. Parent/Student referral
  - \_\_\_\_\_ g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. Teacher - student ratio \_\_\_\_\_
3. Teacher preparation:
  - a. Academic major(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Degree(s) held \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Credential(s) held \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Professional experience:
    - 1). Years teaching \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2). Years in Opportunity Program \_\_\_\_\_
    - 3). Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Auxiliary services regularly rendering assistance:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Administrative
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Psychological
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Counseling
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. Para-professional
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Administrative support:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. Strong
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Adequate
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Weak

## 6. Facilities:

- ☐ a. Regular classroom  
☐ b. Special room  
☐ c. Separate building  
☐ d. Off-campus  
☐ e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. The focus of your program is:

- ☐ a. Academic  
☐ b. Counseling  
☐ c. Vocational  
☐ d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Classroom procedures:

- ☐ a. Individualized instruction  
☐ b. Programmed materials  
☐ c. Counseling:  
     ☐ 1). Individual  
     ☐ 2). Group  
     ☐ 3). Parent  
☐ d. Supplemental techniques \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Student evaluation procedures \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_10. What factors do you feel contribute to Opportunity Program success? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Your contribution to this study is most appreciated. Please indicate your name and address if you wish a copy of the findings.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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